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House of Representatives

The House met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. PASTOR of Arizona).

DESIGNATION OF THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Speaker:

WASHINGTON, DC,

March 11, 2009.

I hereby appoint the Honorable ED PASTOR to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

NANCY PELOSI,

Speaker of the House of Representatives.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, the Reverend Daniel P. Coughlin, offered the following prayer:

The freedom we enjoy and defend seems to be rooted in our realization that we are created in Your divine image and redeemed by Your revealed love.

So, we are bold enough to turn to You and speak to You, Lord God, as children who are most secure in knowing ourselves; yet trusting in Your gracious care.

With our childish problems, in a world we have created for ourselves, we ask and we receive. You offer wisdom and counsel. In our adolescent difficulties, we seek and we find ways that You show us and empower us.

Be unto us attentive, gracious and forgiving on another day; that as Your free children we may come to know the fullness of Your presence and glory now and forever. Amen.

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair has examined the Journal of the last day's proceedings and announces to the House his approval thereof.

Pursuant to clause 1, rule I, the Journal stands approved.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Will the gentlewoman from Pennsylvania (Ms. SCHWARTZ) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Ms. SCHWARTZ led the Pledge of Allegiance as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The Chair will entertain up to 10 requests for 1-minute speeches on each side of the aisle.

HEALTH CARE REFORM

(Ms. SCHWARTZ asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. SCHWARTZ. Last week, the White House Forum on Health Reform was a critical step forward ensuring that all Americans have access to high-quality, affordable health care. Particularly important was a growing consensus among all stakeholders that we must reform our health care delivery and financing system to maximize efficiency, improve health care quality and outcomes and contain costs.

President Obama charged us, Members of Congress and all stakeholders, to find a uniquely American solution to this challenge. To contain costs and expand access, we must engage patients in their care and realign our health care system to enhance primary care, to better coordinate care for patients with chronic conditions, to provide for meaningful use of health information technology and to apply clinical best practices, all of which will reduce costs and save lives.

Without these innovations, any effort at expanding health care coverage will

be unsustainable. This work will be difficult and complex. But we are compelled to act, both to meet the needs of millions of uninsured and underinsured Americans and for our economic competitiveness.

NUCLEAR WASTE AND DRINKING WATER

(Mr. KIRK asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. KIRK. Today's Chicago Tribune includes a report by Michael Hawthorne that the administration has decided not to move nuclear waste from the Great Lakes. This leaves thousands of tons of plutonium and other transuranic poisons in outdated storage facilities next to the drinking water of 30 million Americans and millions of Canadians. What would happen if plutonium leaked into the Great Lakes? It would contaminate 95 percent of America's fresh water for thousands of years.

We know that respected scientists would never recommend permanently storing nuclear waste next to major lakes and rivers. But that is what Senator REID got our President to do. Under this administration, 35 States will have to permanently store plutonium and other poisons on the Long Island Sound, in the Mississippi River basin and throughout the Great Lakes. This policy writes the first chapter of an inevitable environmental tragedy of biblical proportions that will hurt our country for a very, very long time.

HEALTH CARE REFORM

(Mr. ALTMIRE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. ALTMIRE. Mr. Speaker, for the first time in many years, this Congress

□ This symbol represents the time of day during the House proceedings, e.g., □ 1407 is 2:07 p.m.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.



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